



Dr. Valerie Capers was born in the Bronx and received her early schooling at the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from The Juilliard School of Music, the first blind person to do so. For several years she served on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music. She was also a member of the faculty in the Department of Music and Art at Bronx Community College of the City University of New York (CUNY) where she introduced several jazz courses to the music curriculum. From 1987 to 1995 she served as department chair, where she is now professor emerita.

Her outstanding work as an educator has been lauded throughout the country as being both innovative and impressive. Susquehanna University (Selinsgrove, PA) awarded her the honorary degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, and Lehman College of the City University of New York, Doane University (Crete, NE), and Bloomfield (NJ) College have also awarded her honorary doctorates. Teaching and workshop venues include Doane University; Stanford University; the Cleveland (OH) public school system; St. Thomas (US Virgin Islands) high schools; Brigham Young University (Provo, UT); the Mozarteum, University of Salzburg (Austria); Lenoir-Rhyne University (Hickory, NC); Wellesley College (MA); University of Michigan; and Salt Lake City (UT) Community College.

Among the awards and commissions she has received are the National Endowment for the Arts, including a special-projects grant to present a jazz series at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Meet the Composer, the CUNY Research Foundation, the Smithsonian, and The Fund for Artists of Arts International. Dr. Capers was the first recipient of *Essence* magazine's "Women of Essence Award for Music" where she was in the elite company of fellow honorees Oprah Winfrey and Marla Gibbs. She has been recognized by the Bronx Music Heritage Center as a Bronx Living Legend for her "enduring legacy to the American jazz tradition," and she is a distinguished member of the Bronx Walk of Fame. In fall 2015, NYC Mayor Bill DeBlasio appointed her to the city's prestigious Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission.

An accomplished composer, her most noted extended works are *Sing About Love*, the critically acclaimed Christmas cantata produced by George Wein at Carnegie Hall; *Sojourner*, an oratorio based on the life of Sojourner Truth, performed and staged by the Opera Ebony Company of New York and commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts; and *Song of the Seasons*, a song cycle for voice, piano, and cello that was commissioned by the Smithsonian Institute and premiered in Washington, DC, at the invitation of the Smithsonian, and since then, has been recorded by several artists.

Dr. Capers has appeared with her trio and ensemble at colleges, universities, jazz festivals, clubs, and concert halls throughout the country as well as internationally, including the Chautauqua Institution and Dizzy's Coca-Cola Club (Jazz at Lincoln Center). She has also participated in the Monterey Jazz Festival; the DuPont Clifford

Brown Jazz Festival (Wilmington, DE); Jazz in June (the University of Nebraska-Lincoln); Les Rendez-vous de l'Erdre (Nantes, France); the Mellon Jazz Festival (Philadelphia, PA); Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Yale Summer School of Music, Litchfield, CT; NYC's Kool, JVC and Downtown jazz festivals; the International Grande Parade du Jazz Festival (Nice, France); the Martin Luther King Festival (Ottawa, Ontario); the North Sea Jazz Festival (The Hague); and The Madeleine Festival of the Arts and Humanities: Valerie Capers and Friends (Salt Lake City, UT). Dr. Capers is also regularly heard in NYC at The Kitano on Park Avenue South, and at the Knickerbocker Bar & Grill and Mezzrow, both in Greenwich Village.

Her numerous radio and television program appearances include Marian McPartland's Piano Jazz (twice) and Branford Marsalis' JazzSet. Adventures of Wagner in Jazz, a special program created by National Public Radio (NPR), and About Music (two separate programs, "Traditions and Personalities in Jazz Piano" and "American Composer and Piano Virtuoso: Louis Moreau Gottschalk"), were all broadcast on KBYU-FM in Provo, UT, and carried throughout the country on NPR.

Throughout her career, she has performed with a roster of outstanding artists, including Dizzy Gillespie, Wynton Marsalis, Ray Brown, Mongo Santamaria, Tito Puente, Slide Hampton, Max Roach, James Moody, Paquito D'Rivera, and Jerry Weldon, among others.

Dr. Capers' recordings include *Portrait in Soul* (Atlantic), *Affirmation* (KMA Arts), *Come on Home* (Columbia/Sony), *Wagner Takes the 'A' Train* (Elysium), and *Limited Edition* (VALCAP Music). Her book of intermediate-level piano pieces, *Portraits in Jazz*, was published by Oxford University Press, which has also published her arrangement of the carol "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" for mixed chorus *a cappella*.